

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /059 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9817

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3823

KINSHASA FOR THE SECRETARY

DEPT FOR AMBASSADOR BROWN FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, LE

SUBJ: PARLIAMENTARY MEETING

REF: STATE 103432 (BEING REPEATED KINSHASA FOR SECRETARY'S INFO)

1. AS YOU PROBABLY ARE AWARE HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS VERY CLOSELY AND HAVE REMAINED IN CONTACT WITH PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH SARKIS, JUMBLATT AND KAMAL ASAD.

2. SITUATION IS BY NO MEANS CLEAR. KEY QUESTION IS WHAT MESSAGE KAMAL ASAD RECEIVED WHEN HE WAS RECENTLY IN DAMASCUS. THERE ARE TWO THEORIES. ONE THEORY STATES THAT ASAD WAS INSTRUCTED TO ARRANGE FOR THE ELECTION OF SARKIS FORTHWITH AND WAS GIVEN FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO ASSIST HIM IN HIS EFFORT. THE OTHER THEORY MAINTAINS THAT ASAD WAS TOLD THAT ANY CANDIDATE WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE PROVIDED THERE WAS AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY IN HIS FAVOR AND PROVIDED HE WAS NOT RAYMOND EDDE.

3. MY PERSONAL VIEW IS THAT KAMAL ASAD WAS INSTRUCTED TO PUSH THE CANDIDACY OF SARKIS AND TO ARRANGE FOR A PARLIAMENTARY MEETING
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AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. ON THE OTHER HAND, I NOTE FOR A FACT THAT HE

IS GOING THROUGH WHAT MUST BE THE COMEDY OF ARRIVING AT A CANDIDATE (OTHER THAN EDDE) WHO WOULD RECEIVE BROAD SUPPORT FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY DEPUTIES.

4. SPEAKING OF EDDE, HE, AS WELL AS SARKIS, WERE INVITED TO SPEAK TO A GROUP OF INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTARIANS. HE WAS SO OPENLY OPPOSED TO SYRIA AND MADE SO MANY IMPRUDENT REMARKS ABOUT SYRIAN INTERVENTION THAT IT IS REALLY DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE HIM ANY LONGER AS A SERIOUS CANDIDATE.

5. SARKIS, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS BEGINNING TO FEEL HIS OATS. THERE ARE RATHER RELIABLE REPORTS THAT HE HAS JUST ABOUT THE 66 VOTES THAT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO GIVE HIM THE 2/3 MAJORITY NECESSARY TO WIN ON THE FIRST BALLOT. FOR THIS REASON, HE HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY RELUCTANT TO MAINTAIN A DIALOG WITH JUMBLATT. THANKS HOWEVER TO A STRONG AMOUNT OF FRIENDLY PURSUASION, HE HAS AGREED TO HAVE ANOTHER GO AROUND WITH JUMBLATT. THUS HE MET TODAY AT 8:30 IN THE MORNING WITH SOME OF JUMBLATT'S PEOPLE AND HAD A DIRECT SESSION WITH JUMBLATT (WITHOUT WITNESSES) IN THE EARLY PART OF THE AFTERNOON. I HAVE NOT AS YET BEEN ABLE TO DETERMINE THE RESULTS, BUT HAVE SET UP A MEETING WITH A KNOWLEDGEABLE PARTY LATER ON THIS EVENING.

6. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF OVERALL LEBANESE INTERESTS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THESE WOULD BE BEST SERVED BY THE ELECTION OF SARKIS BY A BROAD MAJORITY UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WOULD INCLUDE JUMBLATT'S CONSENT TO WORK WITHIN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM. IF THIS DOES NOT OCCUR, I.E., IF SARKIS DOES NOT SUCCEED IN WORKING OUT A MODUS VIVENDI WITH HUMBLATT, THEN I DO IN FACT PREDICT TROUBLE AND QUESTION WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO HOLD THE PARLIAMENTARY SESSION ON SATURDAY AS SCHEDULED. THE SECURITY SITUATION CONTINUES TO BE SO PRECARIOUS THAT ONLY A FEW MORTAR ROUNDS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ABORT THE SESSION. THE ARTILLERY MAJOR WHO ZAPPED FRANGIE'S PALACE AT BAABDA HAS ALREADY GONE ON RECORD THAT HE WOULD HIT THE TEMPORARY PARLIAMENT IF THE MEETING TOOK PLACE ON SCHEDULE. MOREOVER, CHAMOUN, FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL REASONS, HAS COME OUT IN FAVOR OF POSTPONING THE MEETING. CHAMOUN, AS YOU KNOW, IS A NOTORIOUS CEASEFIRE BREAKER AND COULD EASILY THWART THE PARLIAMENTARY SESSION BY ACTIVITIES OF HIS OWN, BUT WITHOUT JUMBLATT THAT IS NOT ALL THAT SERIOUS.

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7. IF THE PARLIAMENTARY SESSION IS DELAYED BEYOND MAY 2 THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF COMPLICATIONS, THMYGYETUC THOSE WHO CLAIM THAT ACTS BY THE PARLIAMENT AFTER MAY 2 WOULD NOT BE LEGAL. IRONICALLY, JUMBLATT HAS SAID THIS EVEN THOUGH HE IS NOW ADVOCATING A DELAY BEYOND THE MAY 2 DATE. MOREOVER, KAMAL ASAD'S TERM OF OFFICE AS PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENT EXPIRES AFTER MAY 1, AND HE WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO ASK FOR A DELAY MERELY ON THESE GROUNDS

ALONE.

8. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT A LITTLE FACE-SAVING MIGHT BE CALLED FOR. ACCORDINGLY, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT, IF AN ARRANGEMENT WERE ABLE TO BE REACHED WHEREBY JUMBLATT WOULD BE WILLING TO PLAY BALL IN RETURN FOR A WEEK'S DELAY IN THE PARLIAMENTARY MEETING, THEN SUCH A PROPOSAL SHOULD NOT BE REJECTED OUT OF HAND. AT THIS STAGE, HOWEVER, HAVE NO IDEA HOW FEASIBLE (OR WISE) THIS SUGGESTION IS.

9. AS YOU ARE NO DOUBT AWARE, WE CONTINUE TO TRY TO GET OUT MESSAGES TO ALL CONCERNED IN A MANNER THAT IS DISCREET AND NOT COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. IT IS A MESSAGE THAT APPEALS FOR MODERATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF CERTAIN REALITIES (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL) THAT CANNOT BE IGNORED.

10. AS YOU CAN SEE, AM REPEATING THIS WIRE TO KINSHASA FOR SECRETARY IN LIGHT OF SIMILAR REQUEST JUST RECEIVED (SECTO 11168).
WARING

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